DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 403 049 PS 024 964

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TITLE The Development of the Identity in the Cultural Context.
PUB DATE 96
NOTE 9p.; In: "Childhood Education: International Perspectives," see PS 024 960.
PUB TYPE Reports - Research/Technical (143)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Adolescent Development; *Adolescents; *Biculturalism; *Cultural Influences; Foreign Countries; Immigrants; Personality; *Personality Development; Self Concept
IDENTIFIERS Finns; Germans; *Identity (Psychological); *Identity Formation

ABSTRACT

A central element in the socialization process of human beings is the development and transformation of personality. Two main theories contrast personality as an internal, subjective entity and as an entity that exists only in relation to others. This research project, adopting the second approach, investigated the formation of identity in young people living in bicultural families. It focused on two main points: to which culture did the adolescents primarily orient themselves, and with which parent did they identify. Subjects were 109 teenagers living in Germany of whom one parent (usually the mother) was Finnish. Interviews and a questionnaire revealed three cultural orientations: German, Finnish, and German-Finnish. The majority of adolescents considered themselves German, with the German-Finnish combination a close second. Only 20 percent considered themselves Finnish. Factors such as the language they used, which lifestyle they preferred, and which country they focused on when making future plans were relevant factors in distinguishing between the groups. In the second area of focus, parents were found to be the most important factor in identity formation. Mothers represented a traditional model and orientation toward Finnish culture; fathers represented German lifestyle and orientation. Most subjects wanted to distance themselves from both, preferring to live "between" cultures. No problems with identity conflict were apparent, however. (Contains 16 references.) (EV)

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ED 403 049

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE IDENTITY IN THE CULTURAL CONTEXT

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Background

The Process of Socialisation

The central element in the socialisation process of human beings is the development and transformation of personality. The development of personality is characterised by individual and collective membership in a community. This paper will explore the theoretical definitions of the identity concept and the identity of adolescents living in a bicultural families.

Discussions of the relation between the individual and society or community, of the meaning of individuality, and of the existence of a free will are as old as Western philosophy. According to anthropological folklore, in traditional societies one's identity was fixed, solid and stable. Identity was a function of predefined social roles and a traditional system of myths which provided orientation and religious sanctions that dictated one's place in the world and rigorously circumscribed the realm of thought and behaviour. One was born and died as a member of one's clan and tribe, a member of a fixed kinship system. In pre-modern societies, identity was unproblematic and not subject to reflection or discussion. Individuals did not undergo identity crises, or radically modify their identity. One was a hunter or gather, and a member of the tribe, and that was that (Kellner 1992).

In modernity, identity came more mobile, multiple, personal, self-reflective, and subject to change. This raises the question, is it the case that in modern societies one is caught up in so many different, sometimes conflict-

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ing, roles that one no longer knows who one is? If so, both identity, and the issue of identity, become increasingly problematic in modern times.

In the literature there has been a discussion about stable and fixed forms of identity. Those who argue that identity is stable say that changes in the identity after adolescence rarely occurs. A criticism of the concept of a stable identity can be found in the writings of Jacques Lacan. In his view the individual subject is decentered. There is no autonomous self. A central thesis in Lacan's theory is that the ego, or the personal identity, is constituted in relation to others (parents, friends, relatives, the mass media etc.). The identity is thus constantly undergoing changes which are dependent on our relation with others. According to Lacan it is impossible to talk about stable identity; instead identity can be discussed in terms of preliminary structuring of the subject (Lacan 1975/1991). In Johansson's concept of identity both of these conceptions of the individual have something to say regarding the complexity inherent in modern identity. He points out that the identity could at the same time be both more fluid and more stable.

If we accept Lacan's thesis, modern identity is formed in relation to the different agents of socialisation: family, school, work, peergroup, the mass media and so on. In our society, therefore, individuals play a multitude of different roles. They are constantly occupied with developing their own unique personality. It might be said that there is a gap between so called personal identity and social identity and this gap leads to a constant quest for a meaningful way of integrating these different poles. Moreover there is also the need to be personality and a member of the special group at the same time.

The two different theoretical notions concerning the role of identity and self and its relation to the processes of socialization

1. The identity as an intern, subjective, personal, hidden subject of the action. The self-concept of the person him/herself.

2. The identity in relation to others. In this notion there is no identity or self without you, them, others. The identity will always be developed in relation to others. So, we can say that there is no identity without you and others (Järvilehto 1994).

These theoretical notions are at the same time examples of the discussion of identity in psychology, sociology and anthropology. Every science has its own way of looking at identity and its processes of development. Finding one's identity is one of the developmental tasks of every adolescent. The adolescence is a sociocultural phenomenon, not only a very deep psychological phase. There has been a tendency not to see the youth as a problematic phase and moving into adulthood. The new research regards the young as

an area for research which has its own targets to study and its own right to exist, not only as an open country between child research and adult research. Youth research varies its study focuses: research can concentrate on developmental aspects as the developmental psychology does or on the youth as a social group as the sociological and social psychological research does.

The research related to the identity of youth has been focused mainly on three theoretical starting points. The ego-psychological theories, especially the theory of Erikson (1968), are concerned with youth as a period of identity crisis. According to Marcia (1980) the identity means the commitments of later adolescence: work, occupation, political orientation and he distinguishes different kinds of types or typologies of adolescents. Erich Fromm (1976) approaches the socialization of an individual from the point of view of his or her struggle for autonomy: each person has an urge to create and an urge to be their own creator. They have a need to transcend their own passive existence, and create a feeling and a need of being alive, an identity

The socio-cognitive approaches point out the research topics especially in self-concept and self-esteem and the relation between the self and ideal-self as well as the stability of self-concept (Festinger 1957, Hormuth 1990). The social psychological approaches e.g. Tajfel's theory of social identity (1981) concentrates on the area of an individual's self-concept, which is based on the person's consciousness of a membership in a particular group and the value of that membership as well as its emotional meaning to the person. The idea behind is that the individual is forced to walk a thin line between personal identity and social identity. One feels the need to be unique, of experiencing oneself as a personality, although one is at the same time a member of various social groups.

G.H. Mead (1967) proposed that identity is formed in relationship with others."It has been the tendency of psychology to deal with the self as a more or less isolated and independent element, a sort of entity, that could conceivably exist by itself.... other people are there as much as we are there..To be a self requires other selves." Mead never used the term "identity" but talked about "self". Ill use it in my own work as long as we can prone that identity and self could be two different things. Mead distinguishes between the concepts "me" and "I" in the self. The individual can change the point of view towards him/herself and in principle experience him/herself both as an object and as a subject. The subjective side of self is I and the objective side is me. The objective aspect refers to an identity through others and the subjective aspect refers to the reaction of the subject to the others. The identity is both at the same time: the reactions from others and their anticipations, the individuals own reactions and answers to them. These two sides are always present in identity. It's typical of human action that at the same time he/she can be the object of his/her thinking and a reflective subject. A person can also be asked about his/her opinion about him/herself as an object of observation.

Minority- and immigrant groups in Europe - consequences for the European youth research

We live in a world where the processes of unification and diversification proceed apace. But this process is now occurring faster than ever before. In some ways, large-scale human groups communicate with each other more than ever, know about each other more than ever, and have become increasingly interdependent. At the same time there is a powerful trend, virtually all over the world, aiming at the preservation or the achievement of diversity in one's own personal identity (Tajfel 1981). The question in Europe is whether the three decades of international migration have brought about a new understanding of national identity or whether it has contributed to the formation of altogether new group identities in Europe. This question becomes particularly acute with the emergence of second- and third-generation descendants of international migrants. They are, in a sense, new Europeans searching for belongingness and the right to their own identities at the same time (Liebkind 1989).

Today about 7 million young descendants of immigrant parents grow up, attend school, and seek an occupational future in the European countries where those parents first went to work temporarily. The share of the total population with foreign origins ranges from about 5 per cent in the Netherlands and Sweden to 15 per cent in Switzerland. The Percentage of immigrants among the populations of the other receiving countries ranging somewhere in between (Liebkind 1989). There are many researchers who have demonstrated that the identity formation of young immigrants and second generation immigrants would be more problematic, and the self-esteem lower, than in the indigenous youth (Weinreich 1979). We can pose the question of what kind of identity bicultural adolescents have, especially regarding their ethnic identity. Is it justified to talk about so-called double identity and does such a situation lie at the root of certain identity problems as has been indicated? Results from research projects studying Finns in Sweden, for example, showed that Finnish youth were well- acculturated in the Swedish society. But the Finnish youth were an exception among other immigrant groups. They wanted to switch their mother tongue quickly into Swedish and their reference group was soon their Swedish friends. Finnish youth wanted to quickly distance themselves from the culture of Finland and be assimilated into Swedish society (Ouvinen-Birgenstam 1984).

The identity of bicultural adolescents: aims, subjects, methods and some results of one research

The purpose of this article is to examine the question of identity and identification of young person living in a bicultural family. The focus will be

on two points, first the orientation to the two cultures and the process of identification with the parents. I have observed the living situations of bicultural youth, their feelings about their identity and their orientation to two cultures and I have interviewed adolescents aged about 14 to 15 born and living in Germany of whom one parent (usually the mother) was Finnish. The sample consisted of 109 bicultural adolescents and the methods were an applied form of the Grid method based on Kelly's personal construct analysis (Weinreich 1989), a self concept questionnaire (Scheinin 1990) and a group interview.

The Orientation

The cultural orientation types were classified after the question concerning their cultural identity ("I feel myself..) The answers were classified in three groups. I found three orientation types:

1) monoculturals: "Culture 2" (German) 40 % (N=44)

2) "German-Finnish" : 38 % (N=42)

3) monoculturals :"Culture 1" (Finnish) 20 % (N=23)

How did adolescents exposed to these orientation types ? Could there be found some clarifying factors or variants that could distinguish between the experiences of adolescents in the different groups? The results indicated that there could not be found any variants that would clearly separate these three groups of adolescents from each other. Instead, separating factors could be found between two cultural groups, "The Finns" and "The Germans". The factors were found by Discriminant Analysis, where the discriminant function is formed by separating in the best possible way the groups from each other and by identifying the variables that are important to make a distinction between the groups. These two groups were clearly separated from each other by the following factors:

	FINNISH ORIENTATION	GERMAN ORIENTATION
LANGUAGE	two languages	one language
FUTURE	towards Finnish society	towards German society
CULTURAL ORIENTATION	towards Finnish culture	towards German culture

Figure 2. Factors related to cultural orientation

The Finnish oriented group spoke Finnish more often with their mother than the German oriented group. The mother also spoke Finnish more often

with them. With their brothers and sisters they also spoke Finnish more often. In the future, "the Finns" planned to study and work for some time in Finland. The "Finns" also preferred Finnish culture in their orientation. For example, they felt at home in Finland, had many contacts with Finnish people, preferred Finnish lifestyle, and felt more comfortable in a country setting rather than in an urban setting. The German oriented group, on the other hand, preferred the urban setting.

Problems in identity and identification process

Do young people living in bicultural families have problems in relation to their identity? To answer this question we used the applied form of Kelly's Grid method. In the Grid method the subject has to analyse the following entities: him/herself (self-image), his/her ideal self, friends, parents and German vs. Finnish youth etc. according to specific constructs or qualities. The evaluation provides a 12 x 14 grid where comparison can be made between different entities, for example me and my mother, me and my father, me and German youth, me and Finnish youth. The following figure forms one part of the grid , in which the adolescent compared himself with his/her parents. The extent of an adolescent's current identification with another is defined as the degree of similarity between the qualities one attributes to the parents, whether "good" or "bad", and those of the adolescents current self-image. This is called empathetic identification.

MOTHER	MYSELF	FATHER
Traditional	Modern	Traditional
Money orientation	Life Orientation	Money Orientation
Work Orientation	Life Orientation	Work Orientation
Warm	Warm	Warm
Dominates	Dominates	Dominates
Freedom Important	Freedom Important	Freedom Important
Prefers Culture 1 Lifestyle	Prefers * both of them	Prefers Culture 2 Lifestyle
Prefers contacts with culture 1	Prefers* both of them	Prefers contacts with culture 2
Feels comfortable in culture 1	Feels * comfortable in both of them	Feels comfortable culture 2

* there could be separated three different orientation groups

Figure 3. The identification of the adolescent with his/her parents

The parents were important factors of identification and the most important and central factors for the formation of identity in the youth. The adolescents' relationship to his/her parents is always a part of the their own identity formation process. This process is characterised by collaboration and communication with parents. In our study, mothers represented the traditional model and their orientation was towards Finnish culture. Most adolescents wanted to distance themselves from these orientations. Conversely, father represented German lifestyle and orientation. The young person also wanted to distance themselves from this orientation. The adolescents in a bicultural family live "between" cultures but there did not seem to be any double identity problems in this group. They also did not appear to have problems belonging to any culture. The families were multicultural: both of the cultures have had an influence on the family traditions, on child rearing practices, and on values in these families. The cultural influence on the adolescent occurred in both directions. "In the kitchen there is culture 1 and in the living room culture 2".

Discussion

In my research I am trying to formulate theoretical questions concerning the foundation and formation of identity. One of my findings is consistent with the socialpsychological theory associated with Mead. In his theory the identity develops socially, through generalised others. The origin of the identity is always in a social context. We cannot find an identity which is hidden somewhere in the individual.

Given this finding it is relevant to discuss methodological questions. How do we understand the concept of identity? My answer is that we have to research identity by asking the person trying to define who he/she is. The only way to reveal the social origin of the identity is to study it in a social, and cultural, context. That is, in a situated context and in relation to others.

Adolescence is the time when the basic question "Who am I" is asked with unrelenting force and insistence. It is also the time and when reference groups, significant others, and roles are carefully observed in an attempt to derive meaningful answers. These answers are extremely dependent on the social and cultural involvements of the adolescent. It is the unique nature of these involvements contributes to the unique nature of the individual personality. After Sebald (1992), the traditional social psychological theories of the process of identity formation contain an assumption that the identity is a holistic phenomenon that is relatively integrated. The clarity and comfort with which the individual views her/himself depends on how clear and free of conflict the sociocultural conditions under which their identity developed, were. Contemporary social psychological theories held that, since the social environment has undergone significant structural changes, the process and

product of personality development have also changed. The members of modern societies no longer develop a uniform outlook of life. Rather, they learn situational ways of solving problems and have to rely more on communicative and interactional skills than on rigid principles. There is not just one special identity, there are many identities, many situated identities. The individual in a modern, complex, world has to choose between many commitments and identities.

This process is not something we are working at or thinking about all the time. It becomes relevant especially in situations where we are afraid to loose our identity or when we have to decide where to belong. So we could say that in adolescence these kinds of questions are crucial and central. This is the reason why we study identity questions in adolescence.

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